

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAO PA 00209 01 OF 02 251250Z
ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 HA-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00
AGRE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 BIB-01 /087 W
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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8244
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAO PAULO 0209

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BR
SUBJ: REACTION IN SAO PAULO TO THE INDICATION OF GEN. FIGUEIREDO
FOR PRESIDENT

1. SUMMARY: "UNENTHUSIASTIC ACCEPTANCE" APPEARS TO CHARACTERIZE REACTION IN SAO PAULO TO THE INDICATION OF GEN. FIGUEIREDO FOR PRESIDENT. HIS MOST FERVENT SUPPORTERS ARE AMONG GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR FOLLOWERS, WHO NEED HIS NOD FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP (SEPTTEL). BUSINESSMEN APPEAR PLEASED THAT THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE SELECTION IS OVER AND COUNT THE CONTINUITY OF ECONOMIC POLICIES AS AN IMPORTANT ASSET FOR FIGUEIREDO. CONGEN OFFS FOUND A VARIETY OF OPINIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY, BUT MILITARY CONTACTS STATED THAT THE ARMED FORCES WOULD RESPECT GEISEL'S CHOICE. MAGALHAES PINTO'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN CONCERNED NEARLY EVERYONE, BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL IT HAS FOR AROUSING PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE CURRENT SELECTION PROCESS. ALONG WITH THE STRAINS WITHIN ARENA CAUSED BY THE GUBERNATORIAL RACE, MAGALHAES' CAMPAIGN HAS DISRUPTED THE GOVERNMENT PARTY IN SAO PAULO BY GIVING DISSIDENTS AN ALTERNATIVE. HOWEVER, SAO PAULO IS ALSO EXPERIENCING A RESURGENCE OF FEELING THAT THE STATE SHOULD OCCUPY A NATIONAL POLITICAL POSITION COMMENSURATE WITH ITS ECONOMIC STRENGTH. THIS FEELING IS AN IMPORTANT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAO PA 00209 01 OF 02 251250Z

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FACTOR IN REGIMENTING SUPPORT FOR THE CURRENT SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY: MILITARY OFFICERS WITH WHOM CONGEN OFFS TALKED REFLECTED WIDE SPECTRUM OF OPINION. SAO PAULO SNI CHIEF, COLONEL OSCAR PAIVA, SAW NO IMPORTANT OBSTACLES TO FIGUEIREDO FROM THE MILITARY OR FROM MAGALHAES PINTO OR A THREAT FROM THE NOVEMBER

CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. PAIVA THOUGHT THAT FIGUEIREDO'S EXPECTED ANNOUNCEMENTS OF POLITICAL CHANGES WOULD WIN HIM BROAD SUPPORT. HE EMPHASIZED THAT FIGUEIREDO WAS A MORE COMMUNICATIVE PERSON THAN GEISEL AND WOULD IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. SECOND MILITARY REGION COMMANDER, GEN. NAVARRO, ALSO SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MILITARY OPPOSITION SINCE THE ARMY IS HIGHLY DISCIPLINED, BUT HE THOUGHT GEISEL HAD MOVED EARLIER THAN ANTICIPATED TO INDICATE FIGUEIREDO BECAUSE OTHER MILITARY CANDIDACIES WERE DEVELOPING. NAVARRO PRIVATELY SUPPORTED GEN. EULER BENTES MONTEIRO FOR PRESIDENT, BUT SAID HE RESPECTED THE PRESIDENT'S CHOICE OF FIGUEIREDO. NAVARRO ASSERTED THAT MAGALHAES PINTO, BY WORKING ON PUBLIC OPINION, COULD UNDERCUT FIGUEIREDO'S SUPPORT. HE STRESSED THAT THE REVOLUTION NEEDED CONTINUITY OF POLICIES OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND THIS WAS THE VIRTUE OF FIGUEIREDO'S CHOICE. "THE REVOLUTION IS NOT OVER YET." LT. COL. CONRADO DIAS, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS OF THE SECOND ARMY, THOUGHT FIGUEIREDO WAS A GOOD CHOICE SINCE GEISEL APPARENTLY DID NOT FEEL THAT HE COULD NAME A CIVILIAN. DIAS TOLD CONGEN OFF THAT SENTIMENT WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS FOR A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE HAD BEEN GROWING. HE OBSERVED, HOWEVER, THAT NOW THE ARMY WOULD FALL INTO LINE BEHIND THE PRESIDENT AND HIS SUCCESSOR. SECOND ARMY COMMANDER, GEN. DILERMANDO GOMES MONTEIRO, ONCE AN ASPIRANT TO THE PRESIDENCY HIMSELF, TOLD THE PRESS SOON AFTER FIGUEIREDO'S INDICATION THAT HE SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION AND THOUGHT THAT FIGUEIREDO WAS A GOOD MAN FOR THE JOB. SEVERAL CONGEN SOURCES HAVE STATED THAT DILERMANDO PRIVATELY WAS QUITE UNHAPPY WITH THE CHOICE OF FIGUEIREDO AND THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAO PA 00209 01 OF 02 251250Z

AUTOCRATIC MANNER IN WHICH HE WAS SELECTED, BUT THAT DILERMANDO REMAINS LOYAL TO GEISEL.

3. POLITICIANS: THE ATTITUDE OF ARENA POLITICIANS TOWARDS FIGUEIREDO APPEARS LINKED WITH SAO PAULO STATE POLITICS. PRO-FIGUEIREDO ARENA POLITICIANS ARE USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH GUBERNATORIAL ASPIRANTS LAUDO NATEL, DELFIM NETTO, OR RAFAEL BALDACCI, OR ADHEMAR DE BRROS FILHO. DISSIDENT ARENA POLITICIANS, SUCH AS SAO PAULO MUNICIPAL SECRETARY OF JUSTICE SAMPAIO DORIA OR FORMER GOVERNOR ABREU SODRE, ARE FLIRTING WITH THE IDEAL OF SUPPORTING MAGALHAES PINTO, BUT ARE THINKING TWICE BEFORE MAKING A PUBLIC COMMITMENT. THE FIRST GROUP OF ARENA POLITICIANS IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FIGUEIREDO, AND ARE BEGINNING TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR PROSPECTS IN THE NOVEMBER CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. THE SECOND GROUP TENDS TO SEE FIGUEIREDO'S CANDIDACY FROUGHT WITH PROBLEMS DUE TO A DIVIDED MILITARY AND ARE, IN FACT, HOPING FOR THAT DIVISION.

4. THE MDB IS VERY QUIET. DIVIDED OVER THE CHOICE OF ITS CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP (1977 SAO PAULO 3039), THE ADMINISTRATION'S REFORMS, AND NOW MAGALHAES PINTO'S CAMPAIGN, THE PARTY IS RELATIVELY IMMOBILIZED. CHAMBER MINORITY LEADER FREITAS NOBRE TOLD CONGEN OFF THAT THE MDB HAD DECIDED TO STAY IN A HOLDING

PATTERN TO GIVE MAGALHAES PINTO A CHANCE TO CAMPAIGN. HE SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE MDB TO SUPPORT MAGALHAES, BUT THE DIVISION WITHIN ARENA, AND THE ARENA LEADERSHIP'S BACKROOM MOVES TO STOP MAGALHAES WOULD HELP THE MDB ELECTORALLY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 SAO PA 00209 02 OF 02 251241Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAO PAULO 0209

DEPUTY AIRTON SOARES, OF THE IMPULSIVELY ANTI-GOVERNMENT NEO-AUTHENTIC FACTION, THOUGHT THAT THE MDB SHOULD REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL INDIRECT ELECTIONS, WHICH HE CONSIDERS ILLEGITIMATE. HIS POSITION COINCIDES WITH THAT OF A WILDCAT GROUP WITHIN THE MDB, CALLED THE GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT, WHICH RECENTLY HELD AN UNAUTHORIZED MEETING IN THE PARKING LOT OUTSIDE THE MDB'S SAO PAULO HEADQUARTERS.

5. BUSINESS: SEVERAL BANKERS TOLD CONGEN OFF THAT THEIR BRAZILIAN CLIENTS VIEW FIGUEIREDO'S INDIATION NARROWLY IN TERMS OF THEIR BUSINESS PLANNING: THEIR MOST IMPORTANT CONCERN IS RELATIVE CERTAINTY ABOUT THE POLITICAL PROCESS SO THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO PLAN. SEVERAL MENTIONED THAT FIGUEIREDO'S SUPPORTERS IN GOVERNMENT HAD SEEMED TO GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ASSURE THEM THAT FIGUEIREDO WOULD IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. A CONGEN ECONOFF CONTACT AT VILLARES, THE NATIONALISTIC, MODERN CAPITAL GOODS AND STEEL PRODUCER, SAID THAT FIGUEIREDO WAS A GOOD CHOICE, BUT THOUGHT THAT HE SHOULD BE BRAZIL'S LAST MILITARY PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT OF A LARGE COFFEE EXPORTING FIRM SAID THAT AMONG SAO PAULO BUSINESSMEN, THERE IS LITTLE RESISTANCE TO FIGUEIREDO, BUT LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR HIM, EITHER. (WE THINK THIS IS AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT.) HE STATED THAT MAGALHAES PINTO'S CAMPAIGN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 SAO PA 00209 02 OF 02 251241Z

MUST BBE PREOCCUPYING NATIONAL LEADERS BECAUSE THERE WAS SOME MILITARY UNHAPPINESS WITH FIGUEIREDO. THIS BUSINESSMAN SAID THAT HE THOUGHT ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF FIGUEIREDO WAS IN THE CONTINUITY OF ECONOMIC POLICIES. HE HAD BEEN WITH FINANCE MINISTER SIMONSEN RECENTLY AND SIMONSEN HAD TOLD HIM THAT ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT WANT TO STAY ON, HE PROBABLY WOULD FOR SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR INTO THE FIGUEIREDO ADMINISTRATION.

6. LABOR: THE SAO PAULO STATE SECRETARY OF LABOR, JORGE MALULY, WHILE ANNOUNCING HIS CANDIDACY FOR GOVERNOR, PRODUCED A LIST OF 120 LABOR LEADERS WHO SUPPORT FIGUEIREDO. (MALULY'S MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO MOBILIZE THE LABOR LEADERS AGAINST DELFIM NETTO'S CANDIDACY FOR GOVERNOR OF SAO PAULO. DELFIM NETTO HAS VIRTUALLY NO SUPPORT AMONG LABOR OR THE POPULACE AT LARGE.) SEVERAL INDEPENDENT LABOR LEADERS HAVE SINCE DENOUNCED THE LIST, BUT IT SERVES TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE THAT POLITICIANS ARE GIVING TO LABOR AS THE BELIEF GROWS IN SAO PAULO THAT THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM MAY BE REPLACED BY UP TO FIVE PARTIES. WHILE POLITICIANS COMPETE FOR ORGANIZED LABOR'S POTENTIAL VOTE, SAO PAULO'S INCREASINGLY POLITICIZED LABOR LEADERS ARE HOLDING BACK, WAITING FOR FIGUEIREDO'S CONCRETE PROPOSALS.

7. PRESS: SAO PAULO'S TWO MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO AND FOLHA DE SAO PAULO HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE WAY FIGUEIREDO WAS SELECTED. O ESTADO HAS EDITORIALIZED BITINGLY ABOUT GEISEL'S MONARCHISTIC PRETENSIONS. FOLHA DE SAO PAULO HAS GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE TO MAGALHAES PINTO'S CAMPAIGN AND CRITICIZED THE PRESENT POLITICAL PROCESS IN SIGNED COLUMNS. USIS MEDIA CONTACTS HAVE OBJECTED TO GEISEL'S MANNER OF SELECTING FIGUEIREDO, BUT SOME TEMPER THIS OBSERVATION BY IMPUTING TO GEISEL THE OBJECTIVE OF REMOVING THE MILITARY FROM POLITICS. PRESS CONTACTS HAVE BEEN CAUSTIC ABOUT FIGUEIREDO'S RELUCTANCE TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE REACTED POSITIVELY TO HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SAO PA 00209 02 OF 02 251241Z

MANY BELIEVE THAT THE VALID TEST OF HIS INTENTIONS WILL COME AFTER HE ASSUMES OFFICE.

8. POPULAR REACTION: THE POPULAR REACTION IN SAO PAULO TO FIGUEIREDO'S SELECTION AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT CAN BE CHARACTERIZED AS UNENTHUSIASTIC ACCEPTANCE OF A DECISION OUTSIDE THE ABILITY OF THE PEOPLE TO AFFECT. IN THE FEW STRAW POLLS PUBLISHED BY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, MAGALHAES PINTO, WITH HIS APPEAL TO DIRECT PARTICIPATION BY VOTERS, WAS THE MILD FAVORITE.

9. COMMENT: WITH THE UPCOMING CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIONS, THERE IS A RESURGENCE OF FEELING THAT THE STATE OF SAO PAULO SHOULD PLAY A POLITICAL ROLE IN BRAZIL COMMENSURATE WITH ITS ECONOMIC POWER. THIS STRONG DESIRE FOR SAO PAULO TO TAKE ITS "RIGHTFUL PLACE ON THE NATIONAL SCENE" COLORS BUSINESS AND POLITICAL REACTION TO FIGUEIREDO, THE GUBERNATORIAL RACE, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR AN INCREASED NUMBER OF PAULISTAS IN THE NEXT CABINET. THIS LOCAL CHAUVINISM FOCUSSES SAO PAULO LEADERS' ATTENTION ON HOW THEY CAN IMPORVE THE STATE'S POSITION WITHIN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, AND DOWNPLAYS CHALLENGES TO THE SYSTEM.
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